

Appln No. 10/728,808
Amdt. Dated February 8, 2006
Response to Office Action of December 13, 2005

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action has been carefully considered. It is respectfully submitted that the issues raised are traversed, being hereinafter addressed with reference to the relevant headings appearing in the Detailed Action section of the Office Action.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claim 4 for depending on a cancelled claim. Claim 4 has been cancelled. The applicant respectfully requests the objection to be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections 35 USC § 112

The applicant has rewritten claim 1 to overcome the rejections. Subject matter which the Examiner has indicated has no patentable weight has been cancelled from the claim set. Furthermore, claim 1 has been amended to specify structural features of the separable mold. Basis for these amendments can be found at claims 7, 8 and 9. The applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

At page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 7 and 15 as being anticipated by Ross (US Patent Number 5,056,296).

Ross et al discloses a lid 8 and a base 5 which couple to first and second platens respectively, and are then molded together using heat. However, Ross et al. fails to disclose a first release portion which couples to a first mold portion, and a second release portion which couples to a second mold portion, as specified in claim 1.

The applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the claim rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

At page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 2, 6, 11 and 15-20 as being unpatentable over Ross et al.

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Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art.

In particular, the MPEP states at §2143 "*Basic Requirements of a Prima Facie Case of Obviousness*" that:

"... three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. In re Vaack, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)."

As Ross et al fails to teach or suggest at least the features of a first release element which is releasably coupled to the first mold element to form an upper mold section, and a second release element which is releasably coupled to the second mold element to form a lower mold section, the applicant submits that the claims are patentable over Ross et al.

Furthermore, the applicant respectfully submits that a number of dependent claims are patentable. In particular claims 8, 9 and 13 are specific to the arrangement of grooves, recesses, pins and holes that form the separable mold which have not been taught or suggested by the cited documents.

The applicant has also added new claim 21 to specify the first mold element, the first release element, the second mold element and the second release element are separate elements. Basis for this amendment can be found in Figure 11.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance of all the claims presently under examination.

Very respectfully,

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